

Forest Plan Components— Guidelines

A guideline is a constraint on project and activity decision making that allows for departure from its terms, so long as the purpose of the guideline is met (§ 219.15(d)(3)). Guidelines are established to help achieve or maintain a desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements (36 CFR 219.7(e)(1)(iv)).

- Must not use words that would compel or prohibit projects or activities; however, failure to meet the intent of a guideline would preclude the activity
- Are technical design specifications for projects and activities
- Are stated in a way that clearly shows a connection between the guideline and achieving or maintaining a desired condition
- Are written clearly and without ambiguity so that their purpose is apparent (a “to meet desired condition xyz” statement could be used to describe the purpose), and consistency of a project or activity with a guideline can be easily determined
- Are written so that they are within agency authorities, and the inherent capability of the plan area
- Should not restate direction from other sources such as legal requirements, directives, rules, or regulations (references to other sources are preferred)
- Should not direct or compel processes such as analysis, assessment, inventory, or monitoring
- Must not restate other plan components
- Do not use guidelines if another plan component, such as desired conditions or suitability of uses, would better express the intent
- Are informed by the best available scientific information

Examples

- Mowing, mechanical treatments, and prescribed burning of grasslands should not take place between April 15 to July 15, to protect ground-nesting birds, their nests, and young broods.
- To meet scenery management desired conditions, burial of telephone lines and electrical utility lines of 33 kilovolts or less (including new lines and the replacement of existing lines in existing corridors) should be required for permit issuance or re-issuance unless one or more of the following applies.

Burial is not feasible due to geologic hazard or unfavorable geologic conditions

Greater long-term site disturbance would result if the lines were buried

- Construction or reconstruction of livestock fencing should ensure that the bottom wire is smooth and 18 inches above the ground and the top wire is no higher than 42 inches above the ground to allow for antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) passage.

- Disturbances, such as road construction, off-road vehicle use, energy development, and reclamation, should not take place within 0.25 miles of active nests of mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) and long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*) from April 10 to July 10.
- Seed mixes used for restoration projects in the shortgrass prairie should include winterfat (*Ceratoides lanata*) or fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), or both, on appropriate soil types, to improve winter foraging habitat for pronghorn.
- Mechanized ground disturbing equipment should stay more than 30 feet away from intermittent streams. Refer to State Division of Forest Resources Forestry Best Management Practices Manual for more information.
- When restoring shortleaf pine, trees should be planted on a wide spacing (fewer than 350 trees each acre) to allow room for hardwoods to develop as dominant or co-dominant trees.